

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

As a public relations professional for more than 15 years, I have become increasingly aware of and alarmed by the rapid transformation of the media,

including consolidation of ownership, the demise of journalistic standards- superficial treatment or corporate and/or governmental slant on news, increased "info-tainment," double the number and lowered ethical standards for advertising, and packaged video news releases generated by pharmaceutical, medical or other corporate interests. Perhaps because I have pitched stories and observe the media closely, I recognize these outside influences immediately. I see these trends not only as regrettable but also as dangerous to our democracy. I note that those who rely solely on television news are often uninformed or misinformed about important issues affecting our communities and our nation. The apparent lack of interest in current events is likely a result of the numbing effect of trivial or celebrity "news" and poor reporting.

I've found it increasingly difficult to get small businesses, arts groups or

community issues coverage in the diminishing number of independent outlets and limited space or airtime devoted to local or community news. Although there are many well-meaning, dedicated and idealistic journalists, they seem pressured to write stories favorable to big business. If this trend continues, I believe we will soon have-if we don't already-a completely uninformed and easily manipulated electorate.